

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LUBUMBASHI 0346

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, MOPS, CG
SUBJ: THE INVASION OF SHABA: THE VIEW FROM KAKUMBA

1. SUMMARY. KAKUMBA, 225 KM NORTHWEST OF KOLWEZI WAS SUBJECT TO PERIODIC SKIRMISHES IN MID-APRIL. FAZ REESTABLISHED PRESENCE ON MAY 9. MISSIONARIES RETURNED WEEKEND OF MAY 21. ZAIRIAN SOLDIERS REPORTDLY BURNED MANY HOUSES AND KILLED A NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN AREA, BUT CONTRARY TO SOME REPORTS, THERE WAS NO BOMBING DAMAGE. MISSIONARIES ARE USING GERMAN HUMANITARIAN AID TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE AND BRING VILLAGERS BACK TO AREA WHERE THEY FEEL THEY CAN PROTECT THEM FROM FUTURE RETRIBUTIONS MORE SUCCESSFULLY THAN IF VILLAGERS FOUND IN COUNTRYSIDE. SITUATION PRESENTLY CALM ALTHOUGH MANY LOCAL OBSERVERS EXPECT INVADERS TO RETURN SHORTLY AFTER DEPARTURE OF MOROCCAN TROOPS FIGHTING IN OTHER AREAS OF SHABA. END SUMMARY.

2. AREA KNOWN AS KAKUMBA CONSISTS OF SERIES OF VILLAGES STRETCHING BETWEEN CATHOLIC AND METHODIST MISSIONS (0942S/2344E TO 0942S/2351E) IN ZONE OF SANDOA, 225 KM NORTHWEST OF KOLWEZI, WHERE APPROXIMATELY 4-5,000 PEOPLE LIVED BEFORE INVASION. VILLAGES
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FIRST OCCUPIED BY REMNANTS OF FAZ WHO REGROUPED IN AREA AFTER FLEEING FROM FIGHTING IN KASAJI AND SANDOA DURING FIRST TWO WEEKS OF INVASION. MILITARY UNIT IN AREA WHICH SOON BECAME KNOWN AS VUADI BATTALLION UNDER CONTROL OF KAMINA HEADQUARTERS SAW LITTLE MILITARY ACTION UNTIL ABOUT APRIL 18 WHEN AREA THREATENED FROM INVADERS COMING FROM SANDOA AREA. PEOPLE REPORTEDLY THEN FLED INTO BUSH AND SOLDIERS RETREATED TO KWANDA(0934S/2409E) ABOUT

35 KM TO EAST MID STORIES OF WIDESPREAD DESTRUCTION DUE TO FAZ BOMBING AND PILLAGING. DURING FOLLOWING WEEKS, ZAIRIAN MILITARY ADVANCED AND RETREATED FROM AREA, REESTABLISHING REGULAR PRESENCE ON ABOUT MAY 9.

3. VILLAGERS WHO REMAINED IN KAFKUMBA AREA SAY THAT INVADING FORCE NEVER CROSSED LUEO RIVER WHICH DIVIDES VILLAGE IN HALF. ALTHOUGH SEVERAL EARLY REPORTS STATED THAT CATHOLIC MISSION WHICH IS LOCATED IN OCCUPIED AREA WAS BOMBED BY FAZ, MISSION WAS NOT HIT. ONLY BOMB DESTRUCTION IS SMALL NUMBER OF CRATER HOLES IN NEARBY FIELDS. APPROXIMATELY 30-40 PERCENT OF HOUSES ON WEST SIDE AND 20-30 PCT OF HOUSES ON EAST SIDE OF RIVER BURNED. VILLAGERS SAY THAT ALL DESTRUCTION DONE BY FAZ. APPROXIMATELY 100-200 PEOPLE IN AREA THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN KILLED IN FIGHTING, BUT FEW SPECIFIC DETAILS AS YET SINCE MOST PEOPLE STILL HIDING IN BUSH. METHODIST MISSIONARY HOUSE, UNOCCUPIED BY AMERICAN MISSIONARY AT TIME OF INVASION, LOOTED AND DISPENSARY PILLAGED BY FAZ, BUT BUILDINGS NOT DESTROYED.

4. KAFKUMBA IS PERHAPS ONLY AREA OF WESTERN SHABA IN WHICH FIGHTING OCCURRED WHERE MISSIONARY PRESENCE NOT DISRUPTED BY EVACUATION OF MISSIONARIES OUT OF ZAIRE. THUS MISSIONARIES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REESTABLISH THEMSELVES RECENTLY. ONE CATHOLIC SISTER REMAINED THROUGHOUT FIGHTING. EUROPEAN CATHOLIC PRIEST AND OTHER SISTERS RETURNED FROM LEAVE ON MAY 21. METHODIST MISSION RUN BY ZAIRIANS SOME OF WHOM RETURNED FROM BUSH WHEN AMERICAN MISSIONARY PLANE BEGAN MAKING VISITS ON MAY 21. FOLLOW-UP VISITS MADE ON MAY 23 AND 25 AND PLANNED REGULARLY FOR IMMEDIATE FUTURE. MISSIONARIES ARE USING GERMAN HUMANITARIAN CONFIDENTIAL

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AID OF FOODSTUFFS AND MEDICINES TO BRING VILLAGERS BACK INTO AREA. BECAUSE GOVERNMENT IS PROMOTING RETURN OF VILLAGERS, MISSIONARY RELIEF FLIGHTS HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED AND MISSIONARIES HAVE BEEN ALLOWED TO DISTRIBUTE FOOD WITHOUT CHANNELING THROUGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS OR SOLDIERS. MISSIONARIES BELIEVE THEIR PRESENCE WILL IMPEDE POSSIBLE FUTURE RETRIBUTION BY SOLDIERS AND OFFICIALS.

5. APPROXIMATELY 350 VILLAGERS HAD RETURNED BY MAY 23, MANY OF WHOM HOWEVER STILL SLEEP IN BUSH AT NIGHT. MANY OTHERS WHO COME TO RECEIVE FOOD RETREAT IMMEDIATELY INTO BUSH HIDING PLACES WHERE FORCED SHARING OF FOOD WITH SOLDIERS AT NIGHT LESS LIKELY. MISSIONARIES ALSO PROVIDE SOME FOOD TO SOLDIERS TO MINIMIZE HARASSMENT. SINCE AID CONSISTS OF NORMALLY RARE COMMODITIES SUCH AS SUGAR, SALT, CRACKERS, AND CORNED BEEF, SOME VILLAGERS ARE EATING BETTER THAN BEFORE INVASION.

6. RELATIONS BETWEEN SOLDIERS AND VILLAGERS IMPROVING, BUT SUSPICIONS REMAIN. MOST OF PRESENT UNITS ARRIVED RECENTLY AND PROBABLY DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL DESTRUCTION. SOLDIERS

OBVIOUSLY TRYING TO GET ALONG WITH MISSIONARIES WHOM THEY BELIEVE HAVE INFLUENCE WITH MILITARY SUPERIORS, PARTICULARLY IN CASE OF AMERICAN METHODIST WHO RESIDES IN KOLWEZI AND WHO IS KNOWN TO BE ACQUAINTED WITH FAZ LEADERS.

7. FUTURE REMAINS UNCERTAIN. AMERICAN MISSIONARY, LOCAL PLATOON LEADER, AND MANY VILLAGERS BELIEVE THAT INVADERS WILL RETURN TO AREA IN FUTURE, PROBABLY SHORTLY AFTER DEPARTURE OF MOROCCANS. PRESENT GOVERNMENT EFFORTS SEEM DIRECTED AT SECURITY WHILE ENCOURAGING MISSIONARIES TO BRING BACK PEOPLE. NO SIGNS AS YET OF OTHER GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS TO WIN ALLEGIANCE OF PEOPLE, BUT AREA PREVIOUSLY HAD ALMOST NO GOVERNMENT PRESENCE OR PROGRAMS. AT SAME TIME, IT MUST BE NOTED THAT MILITARY HARASSMENT OF POPULATION HAS STOPPED AND EFFORT SEEMS IN PROCESS TO RESTORE AIR OF NORMALCY TO KAFAKUMBA.
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